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GLANLUA

AND OTHER POEMS

○
G L A N L U A

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

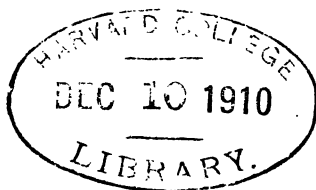
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GLANLUA.

PROLOGUE.

WITH drooping head, in lingering dream, round the
shadowy world,

Dawn's light steps awake her not, Night lay dimly curl'd.
Timidly the Dawn looked back and whispered to the
Day,

"See who lingers past her hour, hasten thy bright ray,
Earth is longing for thy light." Day with sudden eyes
Came and looked upon the Night, who seized with swift
surprise,

Over land and ocean breathed a vapour white,
Hidden in the coils whereof safe she made her flight.

Sunrise and a summer morning—gleams of glassy sea,
Jagged cliffs and crystal waters, mists that rise and flee !
Wider grow the opening spaces as the silent tide of light
Winds in golden flood triumphant thro' the silver wreck
of night.

And, behold, emerging slowly from the whiteness one by
one,

On the ocean many a galley hails the rising sun.

B

Still half buried in the vapour, from the pearly verge
Crimson-spotted, dewy-laden shining sails emerge ;
Idle, unimpulsive, with no power their ships to stir,
Since across their path the night-time trailed its chain of
gossamer.

And the oarsmen still their labour linger to resume,
Though the golden waves of morning melt the banks of
milky gloom.

Wider grow the opening spaces, floats the veil away ;
Broader gleams the sunny silver to the breaking blue of
day ;

And a vast cragged coast its forehead pushes thro' the
yielding mist,

From the gloom of flying darkness into sudden brightness
kissed.

Peak there is and pinnacle, brow and rounded dome ;
Crag that in arrested ruin midway poise above the foam.
Long for many a mile they tower massive from the lucid
wave,

Feet sheer plunged in beryl water, hiding clear in many a
cave.

Snowy-breasted on the ledges rest the sea-birds, and on high
Soars the mountain-eyried eagle easy to the morning sky.
Like as when the sculptor pauses, having well the marble
wrought,

In the passionate inspiration that to shape hath shapeless
brought ;

So the deep sea, hardly heaving, gazed in rest on each
wild form,
From the mountain's heart majestic carved in many a
stroke of storm.

And this scene, so fair and lonely, 'tis the coast of North
Mayo ;

And that morn on cliff and water dawned two thousand
years ago.

And those mist-entangled galleys lingered on the sea,
'Twixt the stacks of Broadhaven and the cliffs of Benwee.
Other names are on these regions than the names that
day they bore :

Then Mayo was Irros Downan, and Broadhaven Inver-
more :

And the land was still the Firbolg's, race whose mortal line
Had not ceased to mate and mingle with De Danann
gods divine.

Now to boundless northward open clear the cool blue
ocean lies,

Glittering in the heaving water seven the sharp-peaked
stacks arise,

And the nearer sea gleams brighter, broken now by
many an oar,

Speeding with strong strokes the galleys past the moun-
tain massive shore,

Past the headland and the island to the haven of
Invermore.

THE BATTLE.

Alarm in Doon Dohnal ! Cheeks pale as death
Has the messenger panting with failing breath
To the doon's lord, Dohnal, "The foe is at hand,
His ships high ranged upon Kirtan's strand ;
Doon Kirtan is taken ; the ebbing tide
Goes red to the ocean with slaughter dyed :
Over the hills with wild feet fly
Who have scaped from the battle, and swiftest I
Death-wounded bring thee the tale and die."

Ere a man had the fingers of one hand reckoned,
On the dead youth's message there came a second ;—
"Doon Kean is taken ; its lord is fire,
Its warriors trampled to gory mire."
Scarce had he uttered the woeful word,
Ere pale and gasping there entered a third :
"I have seen the gape-throated dragon of war
Take flight flame-winged from the northern shore,
With boast that Doon Dohnal one morsel the more
Will he make—ere the noon of this day be o'er."

Then aloud cried Dohnal with voice whose thunder
Roused all that slumbered the doon's roof under,
"Awake, O heroes of slaughtering blows,
Ere the prey we be made of our hateful foes!"
Then straight from their couches the warriors sprang,
And clothed them in brightness of battle, and rang
The spear and shield and the javelin's clang
Shrill through the morning, the doon's war cry;—
As a lion's, that roused by a danger nigh,
Shakes from him night and dimness of eye,
And the forest is filled with the boom of his roar:
And the tramp of their feet as they trooped to the
door

Their chieftain to meet was heavy and loud;
From their chambers of slumber they came as a cloud,
And about their chieftain they gathered as bright
As clouds round the sun at his rising; for white
Were their tunics of linen with gold thread shotted;
Their cloaks blue, crimson or green red-spotted;
Swords gold-hilted the warriors wore;
Three spears flesh-seeking each right-hand bore:
The strength of the left did the bronze shield hold,
Bright-veined with silver, and bossed with gold.
Fair were the men, and of stature tall,
Noble of aspect and valiant all;
But among them not one was so glorious to see
As their chief of renown, strong Dohnal Doolwee;
For as meadows of May in their green and gold

Was the emerald hue of his cloak to behold,
As the yellow locks on his shoulders rolled :
And under the mantle of gleaming green
A tunic of gold-hued cloth was seen,
Wherethrough ran a glittering silvery cord
Round his waist, o'er his shoulders, then passed to his
sword,
Through the hilt of it twisted, a coil of light ;
And he laid not aside, by day nor night,
That blade swift-cleaving for deadly fight :
Nor other weapon save it bore he ;
But there burnt on its brightness, unquenchably,
The eyes of unslumbering victory.

A moment was gone, and the warriors all,
Had gathered in front of the doon's great hall ;
But dark were their glances, their faces amazed
On the messengers dying and dead as they gazed.
Then, checking the woe from their lips that broke,
Thus deep-toned to them Dohnal spoke.
" Hear my sad words, brave warriors hear !
The foes long-threat'ning at length are near ;
What ill they have wrought us there may be read ;
These three alone from the slaughter fled ;
And one is dying and two are dead.
They have told me the fate of our champions brave,
Who guarded the doons that o'erlooked the wave ;
Their faces again we shall no more see !

But although so grievous these tidings be,
Grief must we put from us utterly ;
Nor yet must the cup of our sorrow be quaffed,
Till the honey of vengeance sweeten the draught ;
Let your hearts be fire, whose tongues of flame
Shall blast and devour these foes, whose name
Surviving records for ever our shame !
Time fails for more words, for this moment below,
The glen perchance swarms with the hosts of the foe."
Scarce did he pause, when with active bound,
Three warriors leapt up the steps of the mound ;
And the sight that they saw was the south sun streaming
Upon spears uplifted and broad shields gleaming ;
And the sound they heard of a trumpet screaming.
That rent the wide air with insolent clangour,
Till the sides of the glen made answer in anger ;
And forth from the host a champion came,
And on Dohnal Doolwee he called by name.
And Dohnal came up on the mound and cried,
Loud-voiced, " I am Dohnal." The champion replied,
These the words are of Fergus, " Your lives will I spare,
If the doon ye abandon dismantled and bare,
And free from your yoke those tribes that ye dare
To hold in subjection." " For battle prepare,"
Thus Dohnal defied them, " and brave though ye be,
Have ye one will contend single-handed with me ? "
Came an answer of laughter, " The least of our host,
Silly chief, thy valour tenfold doth boast,

Come down and be slain if thou wishest to die !”
“Your least or your greatest,” made Dohnal reply,
“Let him come, for to me it is one !” Then leaping
Lightly down from the mound where his warriors
keeping

Keen watch still stood, he walked to the green,
That all the space covered the glen sides between
At the foot of the doon ; but on one side the flow
Of a rivulet rippled oak shades below,
Intermingled with flicker of birch, and the foe
Were in front to the north, bright-crested and speared ;
And behind, high-ranged, his champions appeared,
As they stood bright-hued on the doon’s broad mound,
And clustered the gate, that they guarded, around,
To the tempest of war as a rainbow ; and then
Stood Dohnal alone in the midst of the glen,
And his cloak he cast from him and as the sun’s light
Shone full on the gold-hued tunic bright
Like a flame as he stood on the grass did he shine ;
And he cried, “No longer the combat decline.”
And forth from the host stepped a warrior slim,
And youthful of looks, and in pity for him
Said Dohnal, “Depart ; I will slay not thee
Who art only a child.” “Be slain then of me,
Boaster and coward !” so shouted the youth.
“Shall it be ?” cried Dohnal ; “die first ; and in truth
So fareest thou better than dying the last.”
And his shield met the spear the young warrior cast

And baffled its flight ; and he drew forth his sword,
A weapon of wonder, for forth from it poured
Shafts like the lightning's, and clouds black as night's ;
And with swift arm lifted his foeman he smites,
Who falls on the sward by the blade pierced through ;
And when from the body the weapon he drew,
Bright shone the gleam of it stainless of gore.
Then loudly he spoke, "One contest is o'er ;
Who next comes to battle?" And straightway behold,
A warrior sterner and stronger of mould,
Who thus cried fiercely, "Thy sword I defy ;
'Tis my brother has fallen ; avenge him will I."
"Come, then, and avenge," said Dohnal ; again
A skull from the gleam of his sword in twain
Fell cleft and before him the second lay slain.
Then there came forth a third, "I am named Connal

Doo ;

And although thou hast slain Connal Baun, Connal Ru ;
From me, the third brother, escape shalt thou not."
But said Dohnal unmoved, "Like to theirs is thy lot ;
Thou dost fight but to fall ;" and they fought and he fell.
But of all of his combats 'twere weary to tell ;
For there came forth others in anger and shame :
But their rage was in vain and their fate was the same.
Dark heroes and fair ; some stalwart and tall
Put trust in their strength ; some active and small
In their dextrous fence ; Doolwee was their lord
Till of corpses a score lay heaped on the sward.

And well though their faces their fears dissembled,
The hearts of the champions of Ulla trembled ;
For they felt that their host was a stake in the flame—
One end consuming—the rest for shame
Fast fixed till the fire them too should fold.
Then thus spoke Dohnal, “Champions, behold !
In your host none singly is equal to me ;
So now, if ye will, I will meet your three.”
Straight rose three foemen, and three spears flew
In an instant upon him. His shield broke two ;
But the third to his body a clear way found ;
Yet shrank as it touched him and dropped to the ground,
And he stood without wound while amazed were his foes ;
But first at that moment his fury arose,
His rage for the battle, and holding to left
His shield for defence, one champion he cleft
Through the skull, and the second he pierced to the
heart ;
Then he leaped on the third and by strength and by
art
Shield from him dashed and spear from him wrenched,
And with sweep of his sword blade firmly clenched
Smote the head from him, and caught ere it fell
On the point of the weapon he wielded so well,
Of their sundering body and head scarce knew ;
And, then, with a twist of dexterity threw
The head far behind to the foot of the doon.
And the sun waxed hot as it rose to the noon.

Loud shouted the champions of Dohnal, and then
Rose a wail from the foe ; then silent the glen
'Till the voice of the hero resounded again
As the foemen he challenged, "The next three I wait."
Nor long was the pause ere they came to their fate,
With mien that was bold, but with hearts not elate.
But awhile with them Dohnal did fence and did play ;
Till he saw their hopes grew : so the cat with its
prey :

Till he saw that their valour's bright fire that dwindled
By the breath of his art had been fanned and rekindled ;
Then, wild as the rush of the wave on the shore,
When past is the lull and arises the roar
Of the ninth irresistible wave—once more
In fury he rushed on the foe to repeat
By his strength and his art that last battle feat ;
Pierced, cleft, and beheaded ; in order he slew,
And a head as before to the doon's foot threw.
Then he challenged again, and again three came,
Who for vengeance a-hungred were fed but on shame ;
And again after them as by force of a spell,
Three rose to the combat ; they rose and they fell.
And then shouted Dohnal, "Ye know not aright
Even yet of my valour ; send forth to the fight
Still five of your bravest that so ye may see
No champion of Ulla may equal Doolwee."
And the hearts of the foe were with deep wrath stirred,
And five of their fiercest arose at his word ;

And soon of so deadly a heat was the fray
That the combats before of this terrible day
To the terror of this dire battle seemed play ;
For blows that another fivefold had slain
Plied the five fierce fighters on Dohnal in vain.
Then breathless with fury backward they drew,
But he gave them not respite their strength to renew ;
For with arm unswerving and sword swift sweeping
Dread was the harvest of heads of his reaping.
Head after head on the meadow before them
Toppled down at his stroke from the bodies that bore
 them ;
Smitten in turn of the ill-fated five,
Headless awhile stood each as alive,
Bubbling over with blood and his weapon still wielding,
At the sudden death-summons amazed and unyielding ;
Then one over other, sigh heard not nor groan,
Sank sideways to earth like a meadow-swathe mown.
And still, like the kindling of masterless fire,
By the deaths of them fed rose furious his ire,
From stroke unto stroke high blazing and higher,
Till before him beholding the last of them lie
In rage uncontrollable thus did he cry,
“ Fifty or five of you now I defy,
Let the host of you come to me quickly to die ! ”
And with one heart’s anger though fierce rushed the foe
 on him,
Idle the effort of thrust or of blow on him ;

Furious the storm of the spears that did rain on him,
But as rain on a rock was their pelting in vain on him.
As rain drops fiercely the smooth sea smite,
The spears on his body made splashes of light ;
And the sky grew dark till the day was night ;
But the glen was lit by the rays from him streaming,
And the play of his sword was as lightning gleaming ;
Ere it touched them the warriors fell. For an hour,
O'er the cries and the struggle of combat did lower
Darkness so lighted ; then rolled it away,
And splendid again was the brightness of day.
And wondrous the sight that its beam made plain ;
For the whole host that fought against Dohnal was
slain ;

But woundless they were like to those whom the heaven
Strikes bloodlessly dead with the bolt of its levin.
And loud was the triumph that rang through the cry
Of the heroes of Dohnal still watching on high ;
But it ceased of a sudden, as northwards was seen
A new band approaching ; of dreadfulest mien
Was the chieftain who led them, so kinglike and bold,
It was fear but the wrath of his eyes to behold.
And swift though he strode through the valley he made
By the fear of the might of him one not afraid ;
For Dohnal, beholding him, cried, " Lo ! the king !
And the leader that doom to my hands doth bring !
Eaglets of Dohnal ! down from your eyrie !
Swoop to the slaughter ! my arm groweth weary ;

Lo ! I leave to you all save the one for your prey ;
One kept for the crown of my glory this day."
And, as from a mountain by fire-throe stirred,
Like a river of flame down rushed at his word
From the doon's mound the champions, their fiery flow
O'erwhelming, destroying, consuming the foe,
Till not one was left of them save the king only,
Whom thus Dohnal mocked : "Now standest thou lonely,
Spared to the last my vengeance to see ;
Than the doom of the slain shall thine own worse be !
For I wound thee indeed, but thy life will I save,
Thou shalt live but to suffer the fate of the slave."
And the heart of the chieftain was bitter with woe,
But he answered in pride, "Not yet is it so ;
Unsafe for thee yet is the fruit of thy joy,
Till indeed thou hast triumphed o'er Fergus MacRoy."
And he fought, but in vain, for his vision was dazed
By the gleam of the sword that in front of him blazed :
Till, his shield dashed from him, his right arm broken,
Fell the sword from his grasp. "If in vain I have spoken,"
Cried Dohnal, "O proud king, answer me thou ;
Shall I beg thee to spare our lives to us now ?"
And a moment in front of him Fergus stood dumb ;
Then, with pangs of sharp pain and of shame overcome,
Sank sudden to earth in a death-deep swoon.
"Uplift him," said Dohnal, "and bear to the doon."

DOHNAL AND GLANLUA.

So, aloft to the doon was the great king borne,
His high soul hidden awhile from scorn ;
For great and little, and young and old,
Their chieftain in triumph came forth to behold,
To praise him and o'er the dread foe to exult.
But Dohnal commanded that none should insult
The hero now fallen ;—that cared for he be
By the sages of healing tenderly,
In watch never sleeping. Then glancing around,
With quick eyes seeking a face not found,
He asked of a sudden, "Oh, where is my queen ?
Are these joys only by her unseen ?"
And there turned at his speaking a grey-haired crone,
Who with wild hand-wringing stood weeping alone :
"Oh, heavy the weight of the sickness that lies
On her heart ; haste, haste to her side or she dies !
For as one to the brink of a steep cliff clinging
Her hold from her slips, and for help of thy bringing
She waits, for no other can save her, she sighs ;
Oh, haste to her, haste, or she dies, she dies !"

And the gladness fell from the face of the chief,
And his words dropped heavy o'erladen with grief:
" Ah me ! I had thought that my triumph to-day
Had chased thy desires and thy sickness away.
Shall I lose thee, Glanlua ? The flower I have borne,
Shall it drop from the stalk by my own hands torn ?
And must I, the stem, stand bare evermore
To the winds that so often have waved me in war,
Shaking round me thy richness of odour and bloom
Inexhaustible ever ? O light in the gloom,
O flame in the lamp of my being, O ray
That lendest me brightness, thou tremblest to-day,
And to darkness I fail ! yet my own is the breath
That hurries the flickering gleam to its death,
Giving proof of my madness.

Ah ! utterance shrill,

Do I hear thee again ? Does my breast grow chill,
As the words of my mother like spirits of fear
Rush by me and shriek, as they pass, to my ear
Their wail and their warning ? Oh ! helpless am I,
Whirled round in these eddies of destiny.
Nay, worse ; for I drift—drift fast to the night,
Tow'rds the ocean remote from the beams of her
light,
Where the terrors of unseen darkness abound,
Monsters of horrible slime—to be drowned
Involved in their coils ! let me after my sun !
Though she verge to the west and to regions unknown ;

If she lure me to shipwreck, ah ! surely 'twill be
Where the hills of Hy Brasil float fair on the sea ;
And sink if I must in the shoreless tide
Let me drown in bright waters ! and now, to her
side,

Let me haste while the fountains of brightness abide
In her being, and lest by my lingering
All virtue be lost to the medicine I bring.”
And the gladness again on his bright face glowed,
As with swift light steps to her chamber he strode,
And entering stole to the couch where she lay ;
But dim was the chamber, estranged from the day
By close-hanging curtains, and tenderly,
“ Heart of me ! livest thou ? ” whispered he ;
And then from the darkness the words came low,
“ Is it thou, fierce Fohmor ? ” “ Oh, name me not so,”
Was his answer mild, “ for, that thou mayest live,
My life’s very marrow of safety I give.”
Then kindled the dark with her luminous eyes,
And her words fluttered up faint, clogged with sighs,
As with spray in its wings doth the sea-bird rise,
“ Ah ! camest thou sooner ! too late is it now ?
I know not, I fear it ! what carest thou ?
But the strength of my life from my bosom is torn,
By the plundering Fohmor afar from me borne ;
And here though my limbs seem to press this bed,
My footsteps already the Great Plain tread,
Where I see myself roam ’mid the host of the dead :

C

Where to one monarch only do all knees bend,
And the shadow of Taythra spreads night without end."
"O grief!" groaned Dohnal; "the spears of the foe
Were harmless to pierce me; thy words not so!
But where is the Fohmor that stealeth thy life?
Is he equal to Dohnal in fierce battle strife?
Not Bálor the mighty of blows, were it he,
Should away with the prey that is clutched by me.
And he is the demon, whose strength is the night;
Let us call to our succour his foeman the light,
Let the curtains be drawn." But the queen cried, "Nay,
Too weak are mine eyes yet to bear the bright day."
But his hand to the act quick speeding, and raising
A corner, in came the sunshine blazing,
And rushed to illumine a woman most fair,
Lying couched on the robe of her own gold hair;
But the curtain he dropped at her gesture, and she,
"Wilt thou tell me the secret?" "Ev'n so," answered he;
"The dread one, my mother, consenting to tell;
For from her and her only thou hearest the spell."
"And when shall I hear it?" "To-night may'st thou
hear;
So thy limbs have strength and thy heart no fear,
On the hill-top alone, when the midnight is near."
"Well! I know not," she sighed; "yet already revives
My strength, and my heart from the death-toil strives
To escape like a bird strong-winged from the snare;
I shall burst it and beat once more the wide air."

“It is joy,” cried Dohnal ; “but now must I go ;
Much toil yet awaits us to bury the foe.
But here in the chamber, oh, linger not longer ;
For soon in the sunlight thy strength will be stronger.
Come, shine as thou shouldest by Dohnal’s side ;
No more must the darkness thy radiance hide.
Come forth to the brightness my brightest one !
Come forth ; let thine eyes be fulfilled of the sun,
And answer the daylight with splendour to-day !
And thou shalt be gladdened to gaze on the prey,
On Ulla’s great king, who in sorrow and pain,
Lies as my prisoner, his whole host slain.
But this, though all glories of mine it exceed,
Till thou dost behold it is wanting indeed ;
Come, let the sunlight embrace the glad mountain,
Purple the heather and whiten the fountain !
I go and await thee.” “I follow,” she said.
So he left her ; and slowly she rose from her bed,
And called to her women who came to her aid,
And in rich robes silken her form arrayed,
And a silver cirque on her proud head placed.
Then stately her steps through the doon as she
paced,
Till she met with her lord. “Lo ! now,” said he,
I will show thee the prize of my victory.”
And he walked before her exultingly ;
And the train that then on their steps attended
Was a troop of warriors brave and splendid.

Nor long till they came to the prison-room,
That held great Fergus immured in gloom :
So gather from heaven's remotest ways
The stars on the sun's eclipse to gaze,
When a surge from the seas of infinite night
Rises and darkens his disc from sight.
But of all that look on that glory dim
There are none but know that there lives in him
Terror and light everlastingly ;
At whose shining they all as ghosts shall flee.
So now in wonder and fear were they,
Feasting their eyes upon Dohnal's prey,
As wounded and shadowed in soul he lay.
Pale was his cheek and sad was his brow,
Though the pain of his body he felt not now ;
For the healers had harkened their chief's com-
mands,
And his wounds had tended with skilful hands :
And the cloud of pain from his body had risen
To muffle his soul in murkier prison ;
And densest darkness of sorrow around him
In viewless chains as a captive bound him.
And a pang of pain and of sharper grief
Shot through his soul when he saw the chief
And his warriors coming to note his disgrace.
But he marvelled much at the lovely face
Of the lady so stately and radiant.
And he lifted his eyes, and with hers they blent,

And bursting wild from her will's control
Straight unto his soul rushed her soul ;
And as there is light at the shock and the jar
On the face of the sun at the crash of a star,
There was light in his breast, whereby was the shroud
Of his grief enkindled to golden cloud
With splendour of rose-bright hues inwoven ;
And a path for the day in the midst was cloven,
Wherethrough was revealed to him liberty
And triumph and Ulla regained. But she,
For a moment, gazed at him silently,
The hue on her cheek less richly burning.
And then, unto Dohnal slowly turning,
She whispered, " I pray thee to take me hence,
For I bear not his eyes' wild insolence ;
And my heart in me still beats weak and low."
So then to her grianawn did she go ;
And her thoughts were as these, " Can it be then so ?
Do love and hatred alike conspire
To kindle the half-extinguished fire ?
A king ; yes, truly a king he is named,
Who in beauty, as gods were of old, is framed ;
A king by the might of his own brave arms,
And valour defenceless of spells and charms.
And if here in this ruin and grief so great,
How must he shine in his royal state,
By his knights surrounded on Ulla's throne ?
For me fit mate of all men alone—

This only uplifts him my height above,
That to his my spirit bows down in love.
Yet here in this peril he lieth—this pain :
But safety and freedom by me shall regain.
I will clothe him once more with his Ulla ; and see !
A fold of that mantle shall then wrap me.
And Dohnal, thou weak one, my hate re-born,
Scarce lives in the chill frost-wind of my scorn ;
For, if thou hadst yet for a little held fast
Thy secret, the danger for ever had passed.
To surrender thy safety for years retained
To the shallow wile of a sickness feigned !
And then, having yielded the weapon, to fire
At the flame of this Fergus my waning desire
To use it ! for him if I never had seen
Content I perchance had remained thy queen,
Having grasped the mastery of thy fate.
Now thou art hardly fuel for hate,
Yet hot must it flame ; for of any part
Of the vengeance joy shall I cheat my heart ?
Come, memory, waken thy slumbering throngs !
Let then stalk before me mine ancient wrongs !
And tell me he slaughtered my brothers, my sire,
And laughed as our doon sank crumbling in fire ;
Vaunting that just with a graze of his brand
He had scorched us away like a sore from the land :
Sparing me only—last flower of my race—
To bear as his bride this bitter disgrace,

That, save with his mingled, my line should endure not.
All this have I suffered, but since I could cure not,
I have endured. It is over at last ;
And the days of my patience and meanness past,
When once is the secret made known, for then
He is but a man to be wounded of men ;
And danger and terror although there be,
As his words portend, they affright not me.
Yet, lest I be tempted some peril to shun,
An oath will I take, and the direst one :—
By the winds that blow and the rivers that run ;
By the changing moon, and her sire the sun,
I swear that this thing shall by me be done.
No need after this for word to be spoken,
No deadlier danger than this oath broken.”

So there in her grianawn alone she lay,
As hour after hour went by the bright day,
Till the stars peered silent from deep mid-sky,
And o'er the brown hills rose the full moon high.
Then came to her Dohnal. “ If now thou hast heart,
To this meeting of fear it is time we depart.
But, ah ! that thou wouldst this knowledge forego.”
And this was her answer, “ I die, or I know.”

MORNA.

So alone together they left the doon,
And clomb the hill by the light of the moon.
Afar to the north and west were the bays
Invermore and Foaduve—a gleaming maze—
Twined with the windings of Mullet's land,
With its teeth of cliff and its cheeks of sand.
Their borders o'ershadowed by many a hill,
Like a mountain lake soft bedded and still,
Forgetting the pulses of life more wide,
That throbbed at the feet of the cliffs outside,—
The labour and anger, the sorrow and pride,
The strain of the heart of the moving sea
As it moans to the moon, "I follow thee,
Let thy face be seen or not by me."
But less was a little that toil this night,
And soothed was the pain with a soft delight ;
For the moon in her open progress royal,
Showered her gifts on her waters loyal ;
Wave and wavelet, ripple and billow,
Each its jewel of light did pillow ;

And glad of the glimpse of the face they adore
Rolled in rapture and told the shore :
Their murmur swelled through the night air still
To Glanlua and Dohnal afar on the hill.
“ This crowned night-splendour of moon and star
An ill deed is it,” said Dohnal, “ to mar,
With rain and tempest and light’s eclipse,
With wind-laid corn and the wrecks of ships ;
For there is not a terror lies chained in the sea,
But the coming of Morna on land sets free.”
And Glanlua made answer, “ If I despise
The rain and the storm, what matter the skies ?
The dimness of beauty that’s clear to-morrow,
Drowning sailor or peasant’s sorrow ?
Far more than these should it trouble thee,
That a touch of the tempest should light on me.”

Then straight from the sheath he drew the sword,
That was bound to his waist by the gleaming cord,
That seemed as if twisted of woman’s hair ;
And he waved the sword three times in air,
And to every wave from the west sky came
An answering flash of lightning flame,
And thus did he call upon Morna’s name :—
“ Goddess, whose home is the ocean cave ;
Mother, whose strength thy son doth save,
Come to me now, for thy presence I crave ! ”

Scarce did the breeze his utterance hear,
Ere the heavens grew cold and pale with fear,
And a shriek as of long-drawn agony
Stabbed dead the song of the happy sea ;
And a cloud swept up from the western shore,
With a terror of tempest that fled before,
Till the moon like a soul in a dying eye,
Swooned down in the gulfs of the black'ning sky,
And the darkness fell, till the blind earth lay,
Sundered from heaven's last hopeless ray,
In the claws of the horror a shuddering prey.
Then shrieked Glanlua in sudden affright,
" Traitor, in league with the demons of night,
Have you lured me hither to slay me with fear ?"
But he answered, " Have courage, for Morna is near."
And then in the darkness beside them was seen
A terrible form, high-throned on the sheen
Of lightning, and clad with a coil of its fire,
That flashed or fell as the speech of her ire ;
From the tongues of its flame as of hounds held
back

By the huntsman's leash from the prey they track,
Her anger arousing, her will controlling,
Came ominous echoes of thunder rolling
In waves of terror o'er mountain and glen,
Re-echoed in terror from hearts of men,
Through Dohnal's dominions. She bore in her hand
An hour-glass, a demon, whose blood was of sand,

And his heart a wheel that impelled by the river
Of invisible time, sent pulsing for ever
The dry bright tide through the emerald frame :
And o'er her, unheld, rose the crescent flame
Of a scythe, pearl-handled, of diamond keen,
In whose blade transparent rippled the green
Of the light sea wave. She did also bear
A skull, in whose eye-sockets flickered a glare,
The burnt-out light of a soul's despair
On the verge of extinction.

And then said she,
The terrible goddess, "Dohnal Doolwee,
I have come from my cave in the roaring sea,
Haste, let me hear what you would with me ?"
And Dohnal in humble voice replied,
"Goddess, thou seest here at my side
My wife most beautiful ; she would know
Wherefore it is that from stroke of the foe
Ever unharmed my life must go."
And angry was Morna, and gazing at him,
The flash of her eyes made her lightnings dim,
And her voice grew terrible as the sea's
When the rage of the tempest to flight puts the breeze.
"Evil," she cried, "when immortals have bidden
A secret in heart of the night to be hidden,
That a mortal should force it to light of day ;
For he waketh a monster himself to slay.
Yet, since so dear thou holdest thy wife,

That to grieve her in aught is a woe to thy life,
And since it is destiny's doom that I
With this that thou askest am forced to comply,
Go thou, for this secret—alone must she hear it—
That the fear of the vengeance may circle her spirit.”
Then rushed upon Dohnal the mist of the night,
Folded him, lifted him sheer out of sight ;
And alone was Glanlua with Morna the dread,
Who holding the skull to her these words said :
“ It is time for thee now to hear and to dare ;
Daughter of Cruahawn's lord prepare !
Place thy hand on this skull and swear
Never to whisper to mortal ear
Word of the secret thou now shalt hear,
Else shall the sins of the soul that of old
Did its sinful dwelling in this skull hold,
And its ancestors' sins unto all generations,
Rest upon thee in the doom of the nations,
In the judgment day be piled upon thee
To blast and destroy to eternity.
Hither, ye spirits, witness it ye ! ”
And Morna ceased, and Glanlua heard
The curtains of darkness around them stirred
With a low faint wailing of joy ; and raising
Her eyes she shuddered, for down on her gazing
And glaring with aspect hungry and meagre,
Were faces of ghosts uncounted and eager
From dwellings of horror and pits of the night,

Gathered their famine to feast on the sight
Of the victim whose soul should rashly assume,
Did they know she would break the oath ?—their doom.
She saw and she quailed ; but the pride in her rose,
And the heart of a race that had trampled its foes
For ages uncounted ; the face of the stranger
Arose, too, before her and cast on the danger
The rays of his beauty, her love's light fair,
And her hand on the skull she placed, and sware.
From the ghosts once more the shrill cry brake,
Thin laughter of triumph ; then Morna spake,
“ Daughter, the secret now shall be thine.
Power had I from the Fates to twine
A coil of my hair round the waist of thy lord,
And a twist of it, too, in the hilt of his sword ;
And the knot that fastens it day nor night,
Is never untied, nor has mortal the might
Thy Dohnal to slay, till the knot be cut through.
And only the edge of his own clear sword
May sever the strands of that guardian cord,
And with might to draw it there are but few ;—
Thou hast heard and hast sworn, to thy oath keep true ! ”
And again rose the blaze of her anger bright'ning,
As she vanished in flashes of blinding lightning ;
And after her surged the shattering thunder,
Till the sides of the long glen shuddered asunder
With rocks overthrown and the hills' heart shaken.
Which oath will she keep of the twain she has taken ?

At the door of the doon sings the silver tree ;
Sad-hearted the strain of its melody,
For it sighs its grief for the dim, deep sea.

For the dark sweet dreams that it dreamt of old,
When the flower it bore was a bloom of gold ;
And the waves were glad as above they rolled.

Oh ! sigh no more for thy home the sea ;
For thine exile ended soon shall be,
And the wave thou longest for longs for thee.

THE BANQUET.

The tapers are lighted. The banquet hall,
Ringed round with shining shields on the wall,
And beneath, at the feast, are the warriors bright
As links in a chain of joy this night.
And there, high-throned on his regal chair,
Sits Dohnal—beside him his queen most fair,—
And of all there gathered more joyous none,
In might supreme and in mirth their sun.
There, too, sits glad on his father's knee,
Laughing and prattling in childish glee,
His dear-loved son, for he had no other,
Strong as his sire and fair as his mother—
Such was his promise of glory to be.
Bright child ! who shall reveal to thee
The fates that await the heir of Doolwee,
Sad heir of the Firbolg destiny ?
Thy long sojourn in the northern sea,
Friendship with heroes, and at the end,
Death at the ford from the hand of thy friend,
Who buried the half of his heart with thee—

The heart of the hero, that lodged in the tomb,
Swell as the seed in the cold earth's gloom,
Shatters to fragments and buries in bloom
Of the blossom that lives to eternity.
Far off still do these fates appear,
Till the sound of thy sorrowful name we hear ;
As the hour grows late, and with sleep oppressed,
Sinks thy head on thy father's breast,
Who tenderly murmurs, " Go to thy rest,
Ferdia, little one." There stood a slave,
To whose hands the father his dear child gave,
Nor a kiss of the fondest love forgot :
But his mother, unheeding, kissed him not.
And then to the bard, cried the chief, " Thy lay,
This hall hath heard it not many a day ;
Now let thy song and the harp's sound sweet,
Make us our banquet's joy complete !"
And the bard, obedient, delayed not long,
But thus to them chaunted his swift-paced song.

SONG OF THE BARD OF DOHNAL

I.

Who can sing of the deeds of Dohnal, dauntless ruler
of Irros Downan ?
Doons cliff-taming has he for his dwelling, doons by the
drift of the shifting sands :
Lord of the salmon-swarming waters, lord of havens and
fertile lands ;
On pastures rich are his cattle grazing countless, and
flocks of his white sheep browsing ;
Forests are his, of the oak and the pine, where he hunts
the fawn and spears the boar :
Heron and sea-gull, wild swan and curlew, haunt his
margin of winding shore ;
And high in heaven are eagles royal, that over ocean and
forest soar,
Through clouds that to north over Benwee stooping
arch southward on huge Slievemore.

D

2.

This the glen of the gates of Irros, nightly of Dohnal
closed and guarded ;
Well within them the brave tribes slumber, safe from
slaughter and safe from spoil ;
Such for the Firbolg long-defeated first the fruits of the
hero's toil ;
For a might is his that a Danann mother with spells has
circled that none may harm him ;
And from him, as a fountain unsealed, the water of Fir-
bolg rule that had long run dry,
Foams and bubbles, and over the bounds of its ancient
limit again leaps high ;
And rolls strong rivers of broad dominion over the lands
that border nigh :
Filling the ears of the earth and heaven with wail of a
piteous cry.

3.

Fergus, far in his halls of Ulla, hears the roar of the
flood that rises ;
Blows in anger a gust against it, thinking, "thus shall its
course be stayed,"
But the wrathful river uplifts a billow, and rolls on its
strong paths undismayed :
And the storm is past and the Firbolg star in the
cloudless skies of the west is shining,

And there is not a ripple to dim the mirror, nor moan
that beneath its calm profound,
Hidden with all his hosts and heroes Fergus lies with
his glory drowned ;
While here in the doon of the mighty Dohnal, joy and
triumph and mirth abound,
And the verse that sings of the deed of valour floats
winged on the sweet harp's sound.

4.

Lo ! like gems to a golden casket safe restored are the
warriors sitting,
Round the hall at the banquet noble ; o'er their feasting
the splendours shine,
Gifts that around her son the mortal heaps the mother
of wealth divine ;—
Bright-hued garments and jewelled arms, and the taper-
lights on the shields a-glitter ;—
Gleaming, into the goblets golden, drink of the foam of
joy is poured,
Fed whereupon like torches of gladness the warriors burn
around the board ;
And their flames upleap to the flame of Dohnal, by
whom as he sits with the wondrous sword,
Floats, as a blossom on waves of splendour, Glanlua his
queen adored.

"True is the lay thou hast sung, O bard !
This brooch from my breast take thou for reward."
So spake the chief ; and the queen too said,
" Rich gift from me thou hast merited,
Who hast sung so well my dear lord's praise ;
This circlet of gold is the meed of thy lays."
And then she arose in queenly wise,
And glancing around her with full bright eyes,
She spake, " O warriors, now by me
Has a cup been mingled, drink it ye."
And attentive came to her side the bearer
And took the cup that her hands made fairer,
And in turn each warrior drank thereof,
In sign to the queen of loyal love,
And deepest of all and last drank he,
Who loved her deepest, her lord, Doolwee.

Why was it now that around the hall,
Silence and stillness seemed to fall ?
Talk foamed no more with the laugh ; not one
Ended the words he had just begun.
For as when a cloud creeps under the sun
Came sleep as a shadow, from man to man,
In the order they drank of the bowl it ran,
Till there was not one but a drowsed sleep slept.
Then arose Glanlua once more, and swept
The still bright circle with keen swift glance,
And she laughed in triumph, " Secure thy trance

Now holds thee a prisoner for death, Doolwee ;
Thou canst not fight, and thou canst not flee !”
And then at her word was the door flung wide,
And there entered the chamber with long swift stride,
In black garb clad and with terrible joy,
In his fierce eyes blazing—King Fergus MacRoy.
And the queen cried, “ Lo ! the task that was mine
I have wrought ; do now what remains—it is thine.”
And it was not with lingering steps he came,
Till he bent o’er the great chief’s slumbering frame,
And he seized by the hilt the mighty sword,
That, save to the grasp of its own strong lord,
Its scabbard had never forsaken ; and then
He pulled with a strength as of five strong men,
No effort to him, but the sword clung tight,
As if one with the sheath ; then a hero’s might
Put he forth, such as oft had a whole host felled ;
But the sheath still closely the bright blade held.
Though taxed was it sorely, and deeply it moaned,
And the chief still woke not, but trembled and groaned ;
Sweat burst on his brow that was knotted with pain,
As the dim dream horror he struggled in vain
To heave from his breast. Then Fergus the strength
Of a Fohmor giant put forth at length,
And he dragged to the light the sword’s long gleam ;
Reluctant it came with a thin low scream ;
And yet slept Dohnal, though mightily
Was his body convulsed, as with agony.

But Fergus delayed not the use of the sword,
And with quick touch skilful put forth to the cord
That circled the sleeper. At touch of the blade,
All round him a gleam as of swift light played,
And the girdle no edge save the sword's could divide,
Was sundered for ever: deep Dohnal sighed,
And then, as if utterly vanquished, lay still.
But the queen burst out into triumph shrill,
"O hero victorious! O mighty!" she said,
"Haste now ere he waken, and smite thou his head
With his own sword from him." He answered, "No;
For my combat is not with a sleeping foe."
And he smote upon Dohnal's cheek with the blade;
And he, at last waking, confused and dismayed,
Staggered to his feet like a drunken man
And stared at the queen and Fergus. The plan
Of their treachery broke on his mind as the sweep
Of a glance revealed him his warriors' sleep,
And his sword in the hand of his foe he beheld,
While the cord whose power all hurt repelled,
He, searching about him, nowhere found;
But the sheath it fastened was on the ground;
And a circle of ashes his feet around.
And silent they for a little; for he,
Though half despoiled of his majesty,
Was mighty still in his grief to see;
Like a ruined doon, such as over the verge
Of the ocean, is sad as the endless dirge,

That the wave to it sings around Aranmore.
And he gazed on the twain in amazement sore,
And first spake Fergus, "At last awake?
Here to thee back thine own sword take,
And fight for the life that now must end,
Unless mere valour its hope defend :
For now thou art stripped of thy coiling spell."
And Dohnal answered in tones that fell
Like the hollow echoes of ruined years.
"Think not my heart is a prey to fears,
If still for a little I crave delay,
And the words are few that I fain would say.
Thou hast betrayed me, Glanlua?" She answered him,
"Yes :"

Fierce-spoken, "and deem it not wickedness.
Vengeance has slept, but has grown in its sleeping ;
Thy spouse didst thou make me unwilling and weeping.
At last I escape the embrace I loathed
And the love of the monster, whose form I have clothed
With hate, till there crawls not a worm in the slime
More odious than thou. Though long be the time,
Call now to remembrance my brothers, my sire,
Slaughtered, the doons thou didst ravage and fire,
And marvel at this." Then Dohnal in mind
Swiftly flew back o'er the years left behind,
In grief such as his, who in sunshine has passed
Through a land of delight—then hears at the last
That back must he travel to find at the end,

Death-darkened before him, the face of a friend.
And in grief he thus spake, "O flower bright growing
In that garden of poison, I took thee well knowing
The peril, and planted thee here in my heart,
In hope that the soft clime and love's sweet art
Would teach thee to leave the old nature behind,
And yield to my tendance a fruit more kind ;
And I knew not I was but labouring
The poison to deadlier strength to bring.
Well ! it is over. My labour has failed :
Love has been vanquished and hate has prevailed ;
Yet this for a sure thing I take not that he,
Even love, had been worsted so utterly,
If he had not himself proved a traitor."

"Oh, true."

Her bold answer came, "and thou knowest that too ?
Then let it but add to thy misery !
I had sunk almost to forgiving thee,
When the love of my Fergus uplifted me
To the clear heights of vengeance and glory again,
Where I stand evermore for the praises of men."
And to her once more made Dohnal reply,
"Yes, great is thy triumph ; so blinded was I
To the wiles of thy cunning : but how should love know,
When a-soar in his heaven, how hate plots below ?
Oh, here should some magic have guarded my breast ;
It was open, and where it was deadliest
Thou struckest ; why now dost thou shrink from the rest ?

Take thou the sword : strike ;—easily,
Even thy hand can pluck life's remnant from me,
Who am wounded beyond all healing."

But she,
Beholding a cloud as of sorrow arise
And soften the wrath in her new lord's eyes,
Thus cried to him, " What ! does the coward shrink ?
Then shamefullest death from thy sword let him drink !"
Whereto spake Fergus, " Unwillingly,
O chieftain, I strike, but it needs must be.
How well were it if thou hadst reft not away,
Though strong were thy talons, too heavy a prey
For the strength of the Firbolg eagle's flight ;
It has dragged thee down from that lordly height,
Where none of thy nation again shall soar."
But at thought of his nation upleapt once more
The fury of Dohnal, and thus he replied,
In the tones deep-hearted of ancient pride,
" Fight now thy bravest, O northern king,
Nor think that in Ulla shall minstrels sing
That the arts of the traitor my soul could quell,
Or that base and slave-like the Firbolg fell."

And then there was battle. No mightier foes
Ever aimed at each other the wounding blows.
The doon shook round them. The bold queen shrank
To a corner in terror. The champions who drank

Of her cup still tranquilly slept in their places,
No shadow of trouble yet darkening their faces ;
While beside them, in deadliest strife engaged,
No equal contest their dear chief waged ;
For the sleep drug still in his brave brain wrought,
And but half of his soul to the battle he brought,
And furious his foe and terrible :
No marvel then if at length he fell.

And then there was heard a voice shrill screaming
Without in the night, " Oh, rise from your dreaming !
Wake from your sleep, O warriors, wake !
And strike one blow for your dear chief's sake."
And three of them heard and did straightway leap
From the gulf thrice sunken of deep-drugged sleep ;
And on Fergus rushed with their quick swords drawn,
Never doubting to slay him, as hounds on a fawn.
But trembling it was not, nor weakness they found
In him, for he drove them the whole hall round,
Overthrowing and trampling its splendours bright ;
And by their swords' sweeping was light after light
Cut down and extinguished ; till darkness grew
To be more than the light, but the three he slew.

And again in the night the cry was heard,
" Wake, wake ! " but no more of the sleepers stirred.
And then in her joy Glanlua arose,
" O hero," she cried, " who art death to thy foes,

Fergus of victories, now let us fly,
While these still sleep, to our refuge nigh
In the forest, where none but a few, who to me
Are faithful, await us." "Yea," first said he,
"It is meet that for joy thou kissest me."
But as to her lips the kiss he gave,
Lo ! to them spoke as it were the grave
From its hollows of silence, so weak and low
To their ears affrighted the words came slow
From the brave lips of Dohnal, "Glanlua, I die :
But to thee are the curse and the doom so nigh,
That their darkness already o'ershadows thy sin ;
Through the door of thy triumph thy ruin steps in."
And in terror she turned, "False croaker of fate !
Dost know now thy own—just a little too late ?
Here, Fergus, the sword ! let the stroke of it sever
His head from his body, and silence for ever
The tongue of his taunting." He did as she said ;
But useless the deed was, for Dohnal was dead.
Then he seized by the hair the blood-dripping head,
And strode from the chamber and out on the mound
Of the doon, and away through the darkness profound
Of the night hurled it far down the glen ; as it fell
Came a wail, in whose grief wrath rose like a swell ;
And the darkness a moment was hollow with light,
And his heart was afraid and amazed at the sight,
For there stood a woman ; the head to her breast
She had caught and with gesture of love caressed :

And her eyes with the floods of her sorrow were dim,
And she pointed a finger of menace at him,
Then vanished in darkness ; but down through the glen
The sound of her wailing arose again
Dilated on threats as of thunder, and swelling
Till the rocks it o'erflowed and the hills, and the dwelling
Of Morna it reached in the isles of the sea,
“ Dead is my Dohnal ! wail, wail for Doolwee.”
Glanlua too heard that wailing loud,
As alone she waited, fierce-souled, uncowed,
All-daring ; and then this thought was hers
That their heads from the sleeping warriors
Should her own hand smite, and with this intent,
A sword from the ground to take she bent ;
Then she lifted her eyes again, and lo !
With darkness above and darkness below,
In each shield-circle a pale light wan
Round the icy eyes of a ghost face shone !
And her heart, that like to a brave fair boat
Over breakers of peril was light to float,
Sprang a sudden leak, and with leaden gush
In did the swamping wave's weight rush
Till she sank swoon-foundering to the floor,
Still struggling with hands her face clasped o'er ;
And in all the night was heard no sound
By the gleam of the ghosts' cold eyes frost bound.
Then in troubled haste to the hall returned
King Fergus ; he saw the one light that burned

Still dimly against the wall, whereby
He could scarce the crouching queen descry,
And the warriors with their tranquil faces
Still slumbering upright in their places :
And by him for an instant too was seen
The lit shield's circle—the ghostly sheen,
And he cried, “ What visions are these, O queen !
Hast thou too beheld them ? ’Tis time that we fly.”
And trembling she rose, “ I have seen them, I.
Away from the doon ! chill-faint is my heart,
For around us the demons of Danann art,
Make the darkness thick with their terrors ; away !”
Still flickered the lingering taper’s ray
As they took from the shuddering doon their flight
With horror on every nerve of the night.

THE FOREST.

In the thick rain mist are the dim hills furl'd,
And the dawn gropes blindly her way o'er the world.
Night had called to the demon of tempest, for she
Was the mother of Morna, "Oh! gather thou me
Thy clouds and thy rains from the farthest sea ;
With the gloom that is thine be my darkness doubled,
That the paths of the coming of day may be troubled ;
Roll thy mists o'er the floor of the earth : pile high
Cloud heaped upon cloud to the topmost sky ;
Let there be not a chink in the dripping air
Unstuffed of thy blackness, till day shall despair,
With the glimmer of watery glances vain,
Of shaking the twice-walled might of my reign."
And the demon gave ear to the summons of night
And with wide-spread wings sprang swift to his flight,
And before the sweep of his pinions he drave
All the vapourish ghosts of the wandering wave ;
And the lash of his wings and the tramp of his feet
To a cauldron of foam the abyss did beat :
And he drank of its waters insatiably ;
And at every gulf he swallowed a sea,

That rose dilating his bulk tenfold ;
Till by regions his darkness he measured, and rolled
With ravage of rain and of wind twin-souled,
And burst upon Irros ; low bowed the woods
To the heavy scourge of the winds and the floods ;
From the watery mantle of muffling rain
Heaved off and for ever renewed again
From the clouds, no breath for the drowning land.

Through the paths of the forest a fugitive band,
Glanlua and Fergus and warriors four,
Strong armed fled southwards to Blacksod's shore :
For still was it night when brought was the word
That for vengeful pursuit all Irros was stirr'd,
And their plans of escape to the northward marr'd ;
False tidings sent of the sea-paths barr'd
By the wiles of Morna ; but bold and brave
The queen took thought of the southward wave,
And of boats that there on the shore should be
Where the Moonhin river runs broad to sea,
And fearless to Fergus thus spake she :
" The boats of the fishers we there shall take
And all save one on the shore shall break,
Whereby the pursuit shall astray be driven
Far up the river, and respite given,
Though rough be the waters, to cross the bay,
And sail with the ebbing tide away
To the land where of old had my father rule,
By the steep-peaked mountain beautiful,

That looks over Clew with its swarming isles ;
Easy the pass through the sea-defiles
On this side of Achill." With dauntless mind
Thus spake Glanlua, wild trouble's wind
Shook the flame of her courage and quenched it
not.

So they turned them to flight ; but ill was their lot
Fleeing through the forest ; for rough was the way
O'er the miry ground, in the dim-lit day ;
The demon of storm with his black wings lashing
To the inmost wood beat the darkness : loud crashing
Fell great boughs before them ; the tall pines affrighted
Sank ruined, when on them the demon alighted,
On the path they should follow, till driven astray
Were their toilsome steps from the purposed way
Into bramble and thicket ; there was not a tree
As they passed that seemed not a foe to be,
Shaken with anger ; it seemed as when
In a town street crowded some hapless men,
Who have wrought things evil, most miserably
Amid blows and jeerings and curses flee.
And they failed their own loudest words to hear ;
But the cries of pursuers for ever near
They heard, so deemed they ; for their souls deep
sunken

In the vast vat of fear had the dark dye drunken.
Till in darkness of utter despair they grew numb ;—
Frozen ; and as in a dream they walked dumb,

Trusting some way yet unfound would be found
That would lead from the horror that compassed them
round,

And threatened they knew not what evil, nor where
It abode, in the trees, in the grass, in the air ;
For the life of the living things had fled,
And demons, it seemed, possessed them instead ;
On the very grass they shuddered to tread ;
And the air itself was a spirit, whose breath
Fawned round and licked them with tongues as of
death.

Then one of those warriors four most brave
Who long to the queen through the terror clave,
Cried suddenly, " If ye would rescued be
There is no way but to follow me."
Thus with a wandering mind he spake ;
Then plunged in the midst of a thorny brake,
And the face of him they beheld no more.
Then cried a second, " The daytime is o'er,
Tis the hour for repose." And he laid him down,
And took for a pillow a pine-cone brown,
And he slept and they could not break his sleep.
Nor long till a third cried, " Lo ! it is deep,
This sea on whose bottom we crawl ; but climb
These trees, and behold ! in a little time,
Above shall we find the air and the light."
And he clomb to the top of a tall tree's height,
And the face of him they beheld no more.

E

Then suddenly shouted the last of the four,
As in front of King Fergus a bound he made,
Brandishing fiercely a long sword-blade,
"Traitor, thou shalt not escape from me !
For, seest thou ? I am Dohnal Doolwee."
And his face was the face of Dohnal ; his form
Grew vast, and his voice out-thundered the storm,
And Fergus shrank helpless, and slain he had been
Had help not come from the dauntless queen,
Who in front of her craft put daring, and laid
Her hand on the warrior's arm and said,
"Lo ! indeed, if Dohnal thou art, though dead,
Help thy Glanlua by terrors beset,
And show the old love for her lives in thee yet."
And there passed o'er his wild fierce face a change,
And a darkness of trouble perplexed and strange ;
For it happened that by the gods' mighty spell
The spirit of Dohnal in this man to dwell
Had come ; yet Dohnal it was but in part,
Nor wholly the other ; and over his heart
Rose her enchantment of beauty and spread,
And her voice was the music of old love dead,
That with notes of another instrument
In a jangle of agonized discord blent :
And he staggered and fell like a pillar stone
By a blow from a hand unseen overthrown.
And they left him, and swiftly though wearied they fled ;
For as arrows that leap from the bowstring they sped,

And the archer was terror ; till suddenly
The forest ceased and in front lay the sea.

Deliverance ! yea, so it seemed for the while ;
For a new scowl of danger men take for a smile,
So change oft deceives them. The fugitives stood
Rejoiced to be freed from the night of the wood ;
Yet before them was chaos ; her curtain just lifted
But distant the space of a spear's flight drifted,—
The rain mist's whirl, from whose darkness emerging
The chase of the black waste waves came surging ;
Monsters, that bruised by the weight of the wind,
Thought only of flight from the terror behind :
Black foam from their crushed sides the fierce blast tore,
Ere he flung them in ruin to fright the low shore.
By the fugitives yet was the shore unseen ;
For a space of bramble and rock lay between,
Where the woods shrank back from the sea's breath keen.
And Glanlua said joyous, " See, here is the spot
I had purposed to find, though I hoped it not.
The fisherman's hut is not far from us now,
In a sheltered hollow by the rocks below ;
There must we rest till the storm overblow."

A valley there was not far from the shore,
Where the air was calm, for the storm leaped o'er,
Arching the stillness that under it trembled ;
And therein there were sea-birds countless assembled,

Gulls, cormorants, cranes ; they who live by the spoil
They gather of waters with danger and toil :
But solemn their aspect was now and grave,
Though they watched not the depths of the dark sea wave ;
Not now were their thoughts of the bright-scaled shoals ;
It was warfare and battle that troubled their souls,
And ears attentive they lent not in vain,
As thus from a rock to them spake a tall crane.
“ Birds of the armies of Morna, give ear !
Our scouts bring news of the foe now near ;
And the word of our sovereign, dread word on us laid,
Must be soon, else chastisement direst, obeyed.
Though unequal it is that a bird of the sea
Should fight with the great King of Ulla, for he
Is a champion than whom is no mightier found
Among men, whose abode is the steadfast ground,
Not the wavering water and thin frail air,
That can only our light-plumed burden bear.
Yet remember, we fight not as birds alone ;
For her aid, who sits on the lightning throne
In the ocean cave for ever is ours,
The might immortal of nameless powers
They garnered, who lived in the early earth
When she brought strange beings of power to birth,
Wondrous and of their kind but few ;
And for their sustenance strange fruit grew,
Pale and moon-ripened, deathless and rare,
In the days and the nights before men were.

Not such are the beings that earth now breeds ;
No more the vast god nor the demon : her seeds
Wide-handed she scatters, wide-handed feeds
Strong creatures of commoner kind that draw
Brief strength thereoutof and worship with awe
The gods, who with deathless might endued,
Linger alone in their solitude,
And love not the light of the plain broad sky,
But seek for the shadows, to darkness fly,
Mystery's children, and earth is men's :
Yet have they pulsed into mortal veins
Their blood, that as fire therein doth run ;
A hidden stream that leaps to the sun,
In the sudden glory of godlike men ;
But where it shall leap none know nor when.
Oft darkened is it by mortal woes.
Dohnal has perished, Ferdia grows
To fame and to sorrow ill-fated one ;
But if Morna be mighty to venge her son,
Though helpless to save him, not yet we know.
She tells us not why the tempests blow,
Nor wherefore the fish-tribes come and go.
So let us for battle brave hearts prepare !
For her might forbids us to despair.
And should utter defeat overwhelm our powers,
We have wings, and the winds for flight are ours.
And, if we prove victors, years of sweet ease,
Thick shoals of fishes in stormless seas

Are the plenteous promise ; but, dreadful to hear,
Storm and starvation for many a year
To us being vanquished." He ceased. At his words
A shudder ran cold through the host of the birds.

Wearily, seawards in slow descent,
Glanlua and Fergus their footsteps bent ;
'Mid the whin bushes thorny, o'er swampy ground,
Round the rough rock hillocks their way they wound,
Till they reached a hollow ; in front there lay
A space that was strewn with loose rocks grey,
Through the midst whereof they threaded their way,
Till they came to a circle of open ground,
By the stones and rocks closed clean around ;
In the midst they stopped—for there rose a sound,
A rush and a buzz and the rocks arose
In a sudden, broad-shielded host of foes.
And they stood encompassed, amazed and despairing
And silent. Then spake there a warrior wearing
A cloak dark blue, grey-bordered, "Ye see
The champions of Irros, of Dohnal Doolwee,
Whom ye have slaughtered most treacherously ;
But we know that Glanlua's wiles in part
Have deceived thee, Fergus ; that grieved was thy heart
For the dark fate of Dohnal when slain by thy hand :
Hear thou our words then : return to thy land,
Unscathed, and leave her to live or to die
As chances, for weak are her wings to fly

From the cage of the might of Morna, wherein
She is surely prisoned and never shall win,
Though its bars be viewless, the air beyond ;
Away then, away ! though thy heart be fond
And daring, and she indeed be fair,
Lest thou shouldst linger that sorrow to share,
That on her, as the night on the mountain's brow,
Descends in its darkness and grief even now ;
But the cloud from the mountain is plucked by the
 morning,
But from her head never : behold thou the warning !"
And he looked at Glanlua ; her head was covered
By a mist of darkness that over her hovered
And rolled to her feet till it veiled her quite :
Then it rose and restored her again to sight ;
And as when the singer ceases, the sound
Of the instrument dies not, but closès around
With notes that complete the full sense of the song,
Tender and pleading, or threatful or strong ;
So, when his warning the warrior gave o'er,
In rushed the tempest's thunderous roar,
With inarticulate voices of woe
Echoing after him. "Yea, it is so."
And then spake Fergus, "These threats are vain :
Too well would ye venge your chieftain slain,
Could ye tempt me to take at your hands disgrace,
And life to endure it, in Glanlua's place.
Let us in peace from your land go free,

And between us shall friendship henceforth be,
Betwixt Irros and Ulla, else enmity
And ruin avenging : ye need not weep
For this woman, that with you ye not keep,
Save the fame of her beauty ye had confined
To your land ; but it streamed upon every wind
Of rumour, a jewel that made so bright
The heart of Irros, that by its light
Were the feet of the spoilers guided thereto :
And the spells of the gods have failed for you,
And the girdle of Dohnal hath been cut through.
Yet heavy although perchance may be
The burden of adverse destiny
He carries, who striveth this woman's to bear,
What the weak may shrink from, the strong should
dare :

And I for this burden will strive, and defy
Gods, demons, dangers, and fortunes, and die
Still clinging to it, though every spear
And sword of your host circling me here
With separate death-pangs pointed be ;
And claiming each one its atom of me
Disperse me to nothingness. This is my mind."
And behold ! as he ended, he heard from behind
Mocking and laughter ; and suddenly burned
His anger, and round on the foeman he turned
And smote him with instant thrust of his sword :
And then from the wound as the red blood poured

A marvel was seen, for over the man,
From his head to his feet, a swift change ran,
From a champion armed to a feathery bird
Transforming ; and lo ! the whole host was stirred
With the like quick change, till the solid might
Of men was dissolved in the eddying flight
Of wings as wild as the whirling gleams
Of the drifting snow, till they vanished with screams
Beaten hither and thither upon the dark air.
And alone stood Glenlua and Fergus there :
And the husk of astonishment opened first
From their minds ; then the fruit of loud laughter burst ;
And the queen thus spoke : " Bold hearts can prevail
Over men, and against them enchantments fail :
In their presence are equal for weakness or might
The sword of the sunshine, the magic of night.
Henceforth let us go on our way without fear ;
There is no third power that can hurt us here."
" O woman," said Fergus, " thy words are wise ;
And methinks that already the tempest dies."
" Yes," answered Glanlua ; " the demon is weak
From the waste of his blood : but the shelter we seek
Behold it !" She pointed. His glances did follow ;
And there close by at the side of the hollow,
Was a hut by the sheltering rocks hung o'er.
And they made thereunto and loud at the door
Knocked Fergus and called, but there answered none.
And he pushed on the door and it yielded soon,

And he entered the darksome hut half cave ;
And silence it was that welcome gave,
For the dwellers were absent. Then searched they
around

And, amidst the ashes, embers they found
Of smouldering fire, that in sods of peat,
Long lingering keepeth the seeds of heat :
And away from the sods King Fergus cleared
The ashes, and into a pile upreared
Slantwise, and lightly arose the smoke
Thin blue, and thereafter the flame upbroke.
And salmon they found and the flesh of deer ;
And they broiled the salmon and made them cheer :
And when they had lulled the keen appetite,
Again they bethought them to hasten their flight ;
For the sound of the tempest they heard no more ;
And when they came forth from the hut's low door,
A dark soft stillness was in the air :
And then to the shore quickly they fare,
And a greater marvel : so suddenly
Some power had stilled the trouble of the sea,
That hardly the splash was audible
Of the slow shoreward-curling swell ;
Yet, amidst the silence, rose from the deep
One wave that passed with a sudden sweep,
Before it, behind it no other wave :
And out of the wash of its waters it gave
No soft-toned music as of the sea,

But cries of shrill laughter and mockery,
And it passed up the river estuary,
Till with many an echo inland it died ;
And a heart's beat after the inland replied ;
For along by the edge of the forest dead
The sound of a sobbing sigh there sped :
" Broken, broken, broken," it said,
Till it came to the beach and wearily
Died far on the smooth cloud-shadowed sea.
And again were Glanlua and Fergus amazed.
Then found they a curragh, which Fergus upraised
On his shoulders and bore to the water's edge.
Then launched it, and unto a rocky ledge
Guided ; and in stepped the queen, from that shore
Well joyed to depart, and in each hand an oar
Took Fergus ; rude were they, but strongly he held,
And with skill, and full lightly the curragh impelled
Took a double speed from the tide's strong drift :
And their way o'er the waters was easy and swift,
And bright broke the sun and the clouds rose high
To the far pure blue of the upper sky.
And said Glanlua, " Safe gain we the sound,
For the wind to the fair north-west shifts round : "
And they reached the wide spaces of Blacksod Bay,
Stretching west to Atlantic, that bathe, ere they say
Farewell to the last peaks and islets, the shore
Where rises to southward blue-coned Slievemore.
Fair shores where the sea and the land intertwine,

And the glory of ocean rolls inward like wine,
Till the cup of the land to overflowing is filled,
Like a goblet of crystal with wine-light thrilled :
Jewel melting its richness through jewel most rare :
And the sapphire of ocean seems vapoured in air,
Till whoso inhales of its breath must be
Intoxicate even unto ecstasy :
Nor now did the might of its potency fail
O'er the souls of those voyagers twain to prevail :
And the queen the rich coils of her hair unrolled,
Robing her shoulders in mantle of gold ;
And her beauty as if from a fountain o'erflowed,
Till the boat in the spray from its waters glowed ;
And the hunter afar on the hillside saw,
And wondered and said to himself in his awe,
"What bark is that on our western sea ?
Mananaun Mac Lir's bright boat must it be."
And Fergus awhile took rest from his rowing,
And spake as he gazed on the queen's face glowing :
"O lady, not to this land in vain
Have I wandered afar from my northern reign,
Seeing that thou art the prize I gain.
Though warriors unnumbered I here have lost,
Most valiant, no more do I reckon the cost ;
From thy heaven I pluck thee, O splendid star,
As a war steed yoked to a battle-car,
Splendour to strength, and we two shall shine
As when fair planets in heaven combine

Their glories and each is brighter : I mine
Into thine shall pour, thou thine into mine ;
And which is the brighter shall known be to none
When doubled, on Ulla re-rises her sun,
For, since I have set in this west, she is dim."
And the fair queen-woman thus answered him :
" It is not in vain that I too dare
Terrors unknown to thee, seeing I share,
Love-chosen, a majesty kinglier
Than aught the dead Dohnal could confer ;
And the leprous face that so long love wore
Changed to fair beauty for evermore.
Oh ! ended the tale of the weary days,
Whose mornings offered my shuddering gaze
The sight of him hateful : I've waked to thee
This morn, as for many a morning to be,
Whose brightness shall hide not thy brightness from
me."

" Oh ! fair are the mountains and fair is the sea,"
Said Fergus, " but fairer tenfold when together
They wear the one mantle of blue summer weather,
And each in the other rejoices ; and thou
And I are as mountain and sea wave now."
" Then which of the twain art thou ? " laughed she
" The mountain ? So be it. Then I am the sea :
Softly my billows roll in to Slievemore."
He answered, " And proud is the peak to adore
The love-line of waters that circles his shore."

Thus in rich converse from each unto each
Swift flew the jewelled shuttle of speech,
And many a gold thread glittering spun
Through the love web that knitted their souls into one.

Over their heads a crane flew low,
With a long shrill cry like a keene of woe.
Over their heads was the sound of the flight
As of birds unseen that travel at night.
Into the water Glanlua dipped
Her hand : by a cold grasp felt she it gripped,
And she lifted it, lo ! 'twas the foot of a bird ;
And she shrieked, and her shriek was the scream of a
bird.

And the oars from the grasp of King Fergus fell.
In a moment her hand was freed from the spell,
But she shivered in terror unutterable.
And a darkness sudden, with inky dye,
Suffused the brightness of sea and of sky :
And a terrible sickness smote the sun's beams
With trembling and horrible green-blue gleams,
Till he died in a moment ; the wind with a blast
Rose fierce, wave-rousing : half-guided, half-cast
Was the curragh upon a rock islet near,
Whereupon they landed in sickness of fear,
Yet striving to keep them bold hearts and high,
Till the new strange danger should too pass by.

The sea was black, spotted with wrathful white,
And the mountains supported like pillars of night
An ebon heaven, and the atmosphere
Twixt the sea and the sky was dimly clear,
And against the horizon to west, from the sea
Rose a light as of lightning suddenly ;
And distant afar was a strange shape seen
Distinct in the midst of the livid sheen,—
A woman's, even Morna's : her countenance
Sped onward the gleam of an arrowy glance
Transfixing Glanlua through distance defied :
And with motion majestic, unswerving did glide
Straight towards them the wheels of her throne of flame,
Till over the islet in terror she came ;
And around her were clouds of the ghosts, whose eyes
Were the ghastly stars of her awful skies ;
The sea she swept with her gleaming hair,
And the forms of strange monsters were visible there :
Swift, red ran the pulses of time through the veins
Of her hour-glass, but now no more she sustains
The skull she once held ; on her bosom reposed
The head of her Dohnal with eyes fast closed
In pity, to see not the things that should be.
And then in the tones of her wrath spake she :
“ Hear thou, O Fergus, my words of doom :
Thou hast slain the one loved son of my womb :
From that traitor's deed for thee sorrow shall grow ;
Kingdomless exile and crownless woe

Are the evils that shape thy destiny :
And the faces of women most fair shall be
For ever the fountains of sorrow to thee ;
Live to endure it ! and now begin,
With pangs most bitter, to know thy sin :
None shalt thou ever find fair as she :
Take her and cast her to the sea !”
And he turned, for his mighty soul was bound
By the gaze of her eyes, by the awful sound
Of her voice that was as the voices of waves,
That choke in the hollows of ocean caves ;—
He turned to obey, but his strong love broke
Her chain for a moment, and weeping he spoke :
“ Hast thou no pity, O terrible one ? ”
“ Such as thou hadst when slaying my son.”
“ Spare thou not then me too to slay.”
Her eyes and her lightnings answered, “ Obey,”
And a hundred-handed compulsion held him,
And straight to the deed that he hated impelled him.
There stood Glanlua her queenly height,
Her soul re-throned on its courage and might ;
Blanched through her cheek to the hue of despair,
Splendid the light in her large eyes fair,
As the lightning whitened her golden hair :
And a smile on her lips faintly there brake,
Like a flower on a grave, as slowly she spake :
“ See ! I have dared even this for thy sake :

Yet I fear it not nor the doom to be,
So surely I know I am loved by thee."
In his arms he caught her and unto his breast,
In a love's embrace that was death's, he pressed ;
Death for a moment of love controlled,
As with cold lips kissed he her wet lips cold.
'Twas a moment : for round him the lightnings cried,
And the winds and the roar of the waves replied,
Till by storm of the goddess's power o'erborne
From the anchor that held it his spirit was torn,
And crying, "'Tis hated thou art of me,"
False words that were wrenched from his agony,
He hurled her into the raging sea.
Nor in woman's shape was she seen again :
But with wet wings flapping arose a crane,
That fled through the darkness of storm and rain,
With screams of woe to the west away ;
Till she lighted at last on a sea-rock grey,
Over Morna's cave in Inishcay.
And there she abides to the judgment day.

The tribes of Irros crowd the narrow glen :
The sorrowing warriors stand below the doon
Where Dohnal shall be buried ; o'er the grave
Thus the last dirge is chaunted by the bard.

Wail for Dohnal, wail for Dohnal, wail for Dohnal !

Wail, wail, wail !

Let the women shriek and weep, and the warrior's cheek
grow pale !

Wail for Dohnal, wail for Dohnal ! wail, wail, wail !

Keeper of the gates of Irros !

Thyself the gate that none could force or scale,
Clasping with mighty hands the mountain pillars,
Till treacherous arts prevail.

Wail, wail, wail !

Wail for Dohnal, wail for Dohnal !

Lover of harp and song and battle tale !

Is not the bard's heart cleft for thee and broken,

His voice henceforth a wail ?

Wail, wail, wail !

Vengeance in the bud is sleeping :
But it shall waken and proud hearts shall quail,
When years forge strength for arms that now are feeble :
 Till then we can but wail.
Weep for Dohnal, sob for Dohnal, wail for Dohnal !
 Wail, wail, wail !

'Twas thus they wailed. Their grief the wild winds heard,
And bore it sobbing o'er the bare brown hills,
And wandered with sad burden through the woods.
They bore it to the tracts of the wild sea,
And ocean doubled his loud voice to wail
Round all the rocks of Irros. Far away
Came keenes of sorrow from the desolate isles,
From waves loud-threat'ning, with tumultuous roar
And lamentation mixed, the lonely crane.

THE TOWER OF GLASS.

[“ENSUITE vinrent trois fils de Milé d’Espagne avec trente vaisseaux contenant chacun trente hommes et autant d’épouses. Ils restèrent en Irlande un an, puis ils aperçurent au milieu de la mer une tour de verre, et ils voyaient sur la tour quelque chose qui ressemblait à des hommes. Ils adressaient la parole à ces gens-là sans jamais obtenir de réponse. Après s’être préparés pendant un an à l’attaque de la tour, ils partirent avec tous leurs navires et toutes leur femmes, à l’exception d’un navire qui avait fait naufrage. Mais quand ils débarquèrent sur le rivage qui entourait la tour, la mer s’éleva au-dessus d’eux, et ils périrent dans les flots.”—D’Arbois de Jubainville, *Cycle Mythologique Irlandais*.]

MILU’S warriors over the main
 Sailed to Eirë out of Spain.
 Near to their course arose the gleam
 Of a Tower of Glass from the ocean stream ;
 And to and fro on the battlement
 Shadowy shapes of men there went,
 Who to their call made no reply.
 Howbeit, wondering sailed they by ;
 And reaching Banba’s destined coast
 Took triumph from the deathless host
 Of Danann gods of magic power.
 And then once more was the glassy tower

Remembered of them. From repose
Scarce tasted eagerly they rose,
And ten stout ships soon left the strand
Filled with a dauntless hero-band
Intent to storm the Tower of Glass ;
But as the haven's mouth they pass,
One ship that would the rest outsail
Struck shallows in the falling tide,
And there perforce must fast abide
Till the rising flood again prevail ;
While onward to the open sea
Its comrades sailed exultingly.

For a day and a night, for a night and a day,
Through the rolling surge they ploughed their way ;
But when the third night fled the sky,
Behold the Tower of Glass was nigh !
And strange though it had seemed before,
Now at its sight they marvelled more.
For though the great sea's mountain swell
Round its margin rose and fell,
Fleck nor flake of foam was seen,
White on the waters eddying green,
And more silent than the grave
Rose and fell the muffled wave ;
On the dim summit of the tower
Still saw they move the shapes of power ;

Giant forms whose hands did wield
Swords as upon the battle-field
With stroke of many a deadly blow
Each aimed at each, as foe to foe,
Till o'er them rolled a cloud-bank grey,
And swept their shadowy ranks away ;
For thinner than thin cloud were they.

For an hour or more the warriors gazed
On the tower with eyes and souls amazed ;
And then its coast they sailed around
Till fitting place to land was found.
Then dauntlessly their ships they ran
To shore and soon was every man
Upon the mystic beach disbarked ;
But scarce a moment ere they marked
That round them rose full steadily
The waves of that unspeaking sea,
Wherein they found no force to swim ;
Its touch took strength from every limb ;
And once the wave closed o'er them, ne'er
Rose they again to light and air.

Over the sea the stranded crew,
The tide now risen, their friends pursue ;
But when they come the tower anigh
What sight disastrous they descry !

Their empty comrade ships appear
Drifting deserted far and near ;
And raising to the tower their eyes
What thing is this they recognize !
Among the shades that to and fro
As phantoms on the summit go
Shapes there are they surely know.
But names of friends in vain they call ;
The voice seems dead from the tower to fall ;
Speak nor heed the shades at all.
Then on every heart falls chill
Fear of unimagined ill.
Each sees the other's blanching cheek,
But scarce above a breath can speak ;
Though in their hearts they curse the hour
That showed them the shade-peopled tower,
Wherefrom in grief and fear they flee,
And silent till once more they see
The ever-moving circlet hoar
Of whitening foam on waves that roar
Girdling the living shore.

THE FINDING OF HY BRASIL.

As, unto one that watches many a year,
Where Eirë's hills look far into the west,
In hope perchance that from the ocean's breast
Its head the bright Hy Brasil may uprear,—
The golden hills he dreams of once appear
Half seen among the clouds of sunset drest,
In many-tinted splendour, but his quest
Finds not again that vision far or near.

So, mocked by glimpses of a glorious time,
Long have I gazed far into Eirë's past ;
But now at length on the enchanted strand,
And those evasive splendours, more sublime
Than dream, the potent fire-spell has been cast ;
Lo ! on Hy Brasil's long-sought shores I stand.

THE RETURN OF THE GODS.

I.

FAIR, yes, most fair, the land !
Stately the mountains stand
In azure shape by lake and ocean wave :
Yet one thing fails, yet one—
A light, than which the sun
Less potent is to glorify and save—
The light of old enchantment shed
By hero, bard and god, the never-dying dead.

2.

So did I speak. Ah me !
Seeing, I could not see :
Hearing, I could not hear for many a day :
Saw not the gathering light
That made most strangely bright
The dim horizon,—heard not far away
The sound of voices coming nigher,
Till round me crashed the storm in thunder and in fire.

3.

Sudden the earthquake thrill
Trembles through vale and hill ;
The graves are opened and the dead arise :
But, oh ! did angel host
Ever such splendour boast,—
New-issuing from the glories of the skies
As these, that, from the rayless tomb
March to the light of day, children of earth's dark womb ?

4.

What voice most potent calls
Forth from their fairy halls,
Where they have slept so long, the race divine ?
Peopled again shall be
Our isle from sea to sea,
With shapes most glorious of the gods' own line :
They come once more with us to dwell,
Protectors of the race that once they loved so well.

5.

To the Boyne's mounded shore
Comes back the Dagda Mór,
The father mighty, with the son most fair,

Ængus, whose singing birds
Whisper their charmed words
In the soft hearts that youths and maidens bear :
And this old glory's second spring
O'er grief of later days its mantling bloom shall fling.

6.

And where o'er Munster plains
Cloud-crown'd the grandeur reigns
Of Galtee heights, Bove Derg his misty home
Amidst the topmost peaks
With steps rejoicing seeks,
And more majestic piles the cloud its dome
Above the god, whose mountain throne
Is fairer seen afar, now that he sits thereon.

7.

On the long-lawless sea
Falls silence suddenly,
The waves again have seen the face of Lir :
Then from all sands sonorous,
And cliffs bursts forth a chorus
Of hymns majestic rising deep and clear :
The voice of all the silent glooms
That deep the chamber'd heart of the abyss entombs.

8.

But on the surface bright,
Where laughs the upper light,
Again the flag of Erin is unfurled,
As in those days of old,
When her wild rovers bold
First found the pathway to the western world ;
As in Maíldún's and Brendan's days,
When Lir's yet lingering law made smooth the watery
ways.

9.

Lo ! from the happy strand
Of youth's eternal land,
From Tir-na-n'óg, the fairy troops return,
The lesser gods, whose host
Left some poor stragglers lost
In the old isle their ancient joys to mourn :
Who there a memory still preserved
In hearts of men that else from the old worship swerved.

10.

And the whole island o'er
Floats from the western shore,
And floats from Derryvara's central lake,

And from the Moyle's cold sea,
The swans' wild melody,
Till the hearts of all that hear it all but break
For grief at that protracted wrong
Of thrice three hundred years, whose anguish fills the song.

II.

Ended at length their woes,
The swans have found repose ;
But death they have not found,—they shall not die ;
And whoso by the shore
Of Erris for evermore
Lists to the still'd sea's evening harmony,
Shall hear in each deep, sobbing, tone
A music ev'n more rich, more strange than ocean's own.

12.

Borne on her rattling car,
With thunder heard afar,
Macha, the warrior-goddess, rushes by ;
And that more awful form
That, save in battle-storm,
Shows not its terror unto mortal eye,
Mór-Riga, round whose head the clouds
Of clustering demons cling, as mist the mountain shrouds.

13.

Among its haunted mounds
Moytura's plain resounds
With crashes loud of Balor's mighty blows :
There on the naked land
Still the De Danaans stand
In stone, as when the fatal eyelid rose
Upon their ranks, that ne'er should see
The vengeance swift that fell on their dread enemy.

14.

For, with the gods have come
The heroes ; their long doom
Of banishment remitted : giant Finn,
Grandson and son between—
Oscar and bard Oishean,
Who a more deathless life doth now begin,
Than that which from his fairy bride
He had as gift received unwandering from her side.

15.

Again mount Nephin's name
Glow with its hero's fame :
No more a cold, bare, brow above the sea,

Long-ridged Ben Bulben's form
Fronts the fierce ocean storm,
Rich-robed anew in Diarmid's memory,
Who there, death-wounded by the boar,
Vainly his jealous chief, for life doth still implore.

16.

Vanish'd long since the walls
Of Cruachán's famous halls ;
But fairer in men's thoughts again they rise,
Than when their haughty queen,
Meave, in the golden sheen
Of battle raiment to her warriors' eyes
Revealed her pale face beautiful,
And led the hosts to war for Quelney's deathless bull.

17.

The torch of epic story
Relumes with sudden glory
Its blazing beacons on a hundred hills :
Far through Atlantic night
Its radiance streaming bright,
The vast waste water with a rapture thrills
More sweet than cometh from the east
In beams that tell the western world that night has ceased.

18.

And the whole isle is seen,
With all its fields of green,
One gem enormous lit with inner light,
Sunk in whose emerald flame
Shines many a starry name
Of diamond lustre keen to cleave the night
Of darkness, that so long has brooded
Over the day that now has risen and subdued it.

19.

But, oh ! what name should choose
Here, the perplexèd muse
From all the knights that fought round Concohar,
Nessa's most royal son ?
Shone not, all-dazzling, one,
Whose glory most she fears her touch should mar ;
Cuchullin, he who at the ford
For his own land his blood, his tears for Ferdia poured.

20.

And ah ! how shall our nation
To him make reparation ?
For him our saints to endless hell consigned,

With all the great compeers,
To whom the circling years
Have brought no equals forth of mortal kind ;
Whom now with our unworthy praise
To rank among the gods immortal we would raise !

21.

Once did the mighty spell
Of Patrick open hell :
And, swiftly borne upon the fiery blast,
Hero, and hero-steed
Of the gods' deathless breed,
Like shadows on the mountains, dim and vast,
Came sweeping by the royal ground
Of Tara, all the hosts of Erin camp'd around.

22.

There for thy country, thou
In vain didst plead ; but now
The cross triumphant, can at length forgive,
And own that with its sons,
Ev'n most exalted ones,
Thou dost by right of equal glory live :
And that no saint's immortal crown
The brightness may outshine of thy mere man's renown.

23.

For, though still brighter they,
Reflected was their ray
From the far orient star of Galilee ;
Thou in the north's lone night
Wast to thyself a light :
Yea, and the Gael had found a star in thee,
From whom an earlier radiance caught
The lesson of high hearts and souls unsullied taught.

24.

And now from ravish'd hell,
Thou com'st once more to dwell—
Once more and evermore thy own among,
With all the comrades brave,
Who to the Red Branch gave
Its name immortal in our Irish song ;
Beside thee, greatest of the band
Save thy own mighty self, MacRoy and Karna stand.

25.

Nor ever fails the line
Of heroes half-divine,
Of kings who "equall'd Israel's Solomon"

In wisdom and in fame,
Name still outblazing name,
The royal seed of hundred-battled Conn ;—
From Cormac on to Nial Mór,
And him who to the Alps the sunburst's splendour bore.

26.

Eirë, O mother, hail !
Yet shall thy star prevail
Against all doom since it is a true star,
That o'er the murk and gloom
Of the sky's lower room,
Uplifted is in stainless air afar ;
The clouds roll by and there it burns
And guidance to thy sons, and joy to thee returns !

27.

Mother of heroes, hail !
What tongue can tell the tale ;
What hand may paint that splendour of thy past ?
Dazzled, my spirit drinks
Light from the bowl, and sinks
In awe of rapture, and wonder at the vast
Host of the heroes and the kings,
That now to sudden life from their old slumber springs.

28.

Long for their absence sad
May the land now be glad
With all their presence, and the rivers flow
Clearer, and for their sake
The hills the azure take
Deeper at noontide ; and more richly glow
Those summits that look o'er the wave,
The westward-sinking sun gilds for his nightly grave.

29.

And may each fruitful field
A triple harvest yield,
Such as of old the bard exultant sings,
When strove the stalks in vain
To bear their weight of grain,
In the glad days of Erin's righteous kings.
May the like now sustain a race
Strong with the strong of old to take an equal place !

30.

Hero, and bard, and god,
Ye that of old have trod
This soil and made it sacred, once again

Welcome for evermore
To fountain, wood, and shore,
To purple mountain and to emerald plain :
From north to south, from east to west,
Your glory make us great, your presence make us blest !

THE END.

3/6

